Letter from Taizé

Living the Council of Youth

November 1975

The gateway leading to God is called « Praise ».

In the midst of crises, whether in human societies, in the Church, or within ourselves, when beset by trials, we can choose one of two ways :

Pain and anguish can turn into bitterness, into a fixation on suffering. And then we come to a standstill and all is lost.

Or else, our hurt and sadness can find an outlet in praise for a love, the love of the One who loved us first.

And the praise of Christ has this unexpected consequence : it carries us forward, it wakes us out of passivity to run ahead to seize all that comes our way.

Brother Roger

The *research-units* are the newest of the many different ways of spending time in Taizé. Groups of limited size, they are meant especially for people who are already involved in an occupation or who will soon finish their studies. The three *research-units* now being offered correspond to three questions which best express the concerns of those living the Council of Youth : "Together with the People of God, believe and share your faith," "Living according to the Beatitudes and involvement in an occupation or profession," "Church, people of the Beatitudes, people of reconciliation." From now until Easter, these *research-units* will continue to be offered every weekend. The following texts recall something of what came up during the *research-units* this summer :

ANOTHER WAITS

For me believing means recognizing that I have been taken hold of, realizing that no matter where I am Another is present, Another waits...

Knowing that I am awaited changes my whole way of thinking, yet leaves me stripped bare : I am not transformed as if by magic. It brings a new way of looking at myself : my poverty ceases to matter, it is the Other who counts. A new way of looking at others : if they share my faith, a communion comes into being which goes beyond all that we can consciously share. If they do not share my faith, my gaze tries to discern the waiting of a being who is unaware — or has forgotten — that he himself is awaited... when I am not the one who has forgotten... Or else I seek to re-awaken a person who no longer looks forward to anything...

Knowing that I am awaited leads me to respond to God's waiting, and to seek him wherever he expresses himself. God expresses himself in all that he has created. He expresses himself in other people, who continually force me to open up as I try to penetrate their otherness. God expresses himself in silence, when I try to still what in the long run becomes a useless scattering of myself. My search for silence turns into a contemplative quest, and in this silence my way of looking is renewed. Then I find nourishment in this Muslim prayer : « In every unfamiliar form your appearance has refreshed my eyes and I have seen but You alone. »

It is the Eucharist which more and more is leading me to discover what my life is all about. The Eucharist which is at one and the same time Christ's giving of his entire life for us, and the offering of his life which he presents to his Father.

The Eucharist teaches me to discover the presence of Christ in the bread and wine ; at the same time it teaches me to discover the presence of Christ in my life. The meaning of life consists in trying to be open to this presence, in discerning the full range of God's grace in all the dimensions of my life, in being open to others, since it is through other people that God enriches us.

In the Eucharist Christ offers his life to his Father. The Eucharist thus leads me to realize that the meaning of my life lies simply in giving thanks. All that I do, even the most everyday matter, must somehow become an act of thanksgiving, an offering of myself and of others which I can make.

At Easter 1976

we will head into the second period

of the Council of Youth

In India as far back as I can remember I can think of conflicts within myself. Conflicts between the cultural values I received as a member of the Indian community and the Western values I received in school. Conflicts between the Gospel value of loving my neighbour and what society demanded of me — that I must climb the social ladder.

As I became more conscious of myself as a part of the world I saw I was divided, between First and Third Worlds, oppressor and oppressed. I saw the Western countries as the cause of many of these conflicts. White people had a black place in my mind.

I came to Taizé and I listened to your struggles ; they were very revealing. I saw that you too are living amid contradictions. I soon realized that the wall between you and me fell. We are not fighting each other. Together we are fighting a common enemy, all that de-humanizes us.

I take back to India this discovery as a treasure to share with my friends, though I know this change is personal and I go back to face the same conflicting reality where the rich countries continue to exploit us and the Gospel continues to be contradicted. But now as I face this I know I am not alone — you too are with me in this search.

ON THE JOB

All day long, the trucks rolled by, loaded with their cargoes of rice and dried vegetables. I had to weigh them. Once in awhile time for a brief smile at the drivers, but then down to business : « Papers, please. » And already in a cloud of diesel fuel, the next one pulls up.

I needed to find silence, needed to sit down on the ground, alone but in communion with others, in order to let God enter into the interior tumult, the uproar born of

ne rhythm and the confrontations of a working-day. There, in silence, to be recreated by God.

For tomorrow, once again, it's back to work. And back s well to the task of helping come alive our trade-union ections, barely a few months old. Opening people's eyes o the way things are is not an easy task. No doubt it ould not be difficult to play upon people's jealousy and itterness, to offer them dreams of more money, but my aily struggle and my membership in a union must have ther motivations behind them.

For me a business enterprise is a group of people orking together who must grow more closely united, rouped for a common task, for the just purpose of earning heir daily bread. It is a group which shares responsibili-ies : if my work is badly done, what right have I to make emands of others ? It is also a quantity of capital to be hared out in such a way that the usual equation is hattered : property, intelligence, hierarchy = money, reater needs.

CHURCH, PEOPLE OF THE BEATITUDES, PEOPLE OF RECONCILIATION

That was the title of the "day of the People of God," held August 17 at ize. A young Italian journalist describes here what the day meant for him :

Almost a year after the opening of the Council of Youth, the *"day of the eople of God,"* one of the high points of the initial period which will close Easter 1976, had the following significance : the Council of Youth is not mething outside the Church, it is not a new movement, nor is it something eant only for young people. The Council of Youth is rather a common commit-ent to discover a new face of the Church, a joy lived together and from thin God's People, a joy whose center is the Risen Christ.

"The attempt to bring about a spring-time of the Church", said Br. Roger, *ncourages us to set ourselves within it, not on the outside, so as to give it w life from within, just as no one can be changed by demands addressed om without but only from within."*

The Council of Youth is thus a means to meditate on and to proclaim th Risen Christ. Moïz, an Indian who was a member of the intercontinental tea which prepared the opening, said, *"We become more and more certain belonging to that immense body which is the People of God."* And Joseph the African from Zaïre who was one of the editors of the *"Letter to th People of God,"* added that the Council of Youth is a commitment to liv along the lines of the Magnificat and the Beatitudes.

The *"day of the People of God"* attempted above all to be a day of oper ness to everyone, young and old, lived with the Church, for the Church. In th presence of Cardinals Marty and Döpfner (presidents of the French an German bishops' conferences) and Rev. Potter (secretary-general of th World Council of Churches) and after the Mass celebrated by the bishop the local diocese, a number of young people spoke of the Council celebration which have taken place in South and North America, as well as the meetings of young people held in Africa, Asia, and in countries *"which cannot b named, whether in the Northern or Southern hemisphere,"* for fear of th repression which the mere mention of their names could provoke.

After this Brother Roger summed up the prospects for ecumenism toda

"Christ came for all." he began, *"the young and the old, adults an small children. His presence, source of a universal communion, turns out t be the invitation to a joyful banquet. But today, all over the world, we a more and more aware of the people left outside, forgotten guests at th festive meal. (...) Among them (do we realize ?) are very many pastor ministers and priests who today are often prey to a great isolation, deserte by all to such an extent that they wonder what sense their ministry ha Can we find even just a single strand that we could weave to unite us wit them ?"* Likewise we must find ways of associating to this universal commu ion in Christ those who not believe, who so often open ways of peace, h continued. And then he asserted that the new forms of opposition betwee Christians, motivated by the present crisis of confidence in man, have at time been exaggerated and blown up. This new type of conformism has shaken eve the ecumenical vocation, which has as its mission the reconciliation separated Christians. *"But at present, the trend which laid the main stres on oppositions is diminishing. And at the same time, we are finding a way ou of a standstill in the ecumenical vocation. (...) Today as never before, th Church's ecumenical vocation is bound to bring it to become a leaven communion and friendship for all people. And with this as its aim, to set asid all the too-easy methods offered by power and wealth. (...) Renewing fro within the Body of Christ, the Church, going to the utmost extremes of lov means that we are already re-forming bonds of communion, and weavin together threads — sometimes there is just a single thread but it is enoug And there, whether we realize it or not, what is being woven is the rob of Christ, his Church. There lies festival, a festival of constant new beginning a festival where those we had left out become in turn inventors and creato of communion."*

Gian-Maria

THE NEXT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AT TAIZÉ

ates : — every week, from Monday evening to the following Sunday afternoon ;

— every weekend, from Saturday afternoon to Sunday afternoon ;

— CHRISTMAS and EPIPHANY : a number of meetings will be held from December 20 until January 6.

Please remember to write announcing your arrival ! Then the work of welcoming and feeding you is easier.

lence and solitude : at any date young people can come and spend a few ys of more intensive silence away from the others.

ge : 18 years and older (a meeting meant for people between 15 and 17 years age will take place February 14-15).

osts : Everyone contributes as they can ; reckon with a basic cost (food d all) of between 12 and 18 francs per day.

dging : in heated sheds (bring sleeping bag, blankets).

Registration to be sent to : MEETINGS, 71460 - Taizé-Community, France.

Name :

First Name :

Address :

(with zip-code and country)

cupation : ..... Age : ....

l take part in the meeting from ..... to .....

s already taken part in a meeting at Taizé : No Yes

eceive the *Letter from Taizé* : No Yes

ould like to receive the *Letter from Taizé* : No Yes

n be part of reflexion-groups in italian — german — french — english — spanish — portuguese — dutch — swedish.

n undertake simultaneous translation from ..... into .....

ed ..... more registration forms / Information material.

FLASH . .

— The period we are presently in will lead up to a new break-through, fi
months from now. At Easter 1976 we will come together at Taizé to bring abo
this break-through : it will be the moment for brand-new gestures. Why Easter
Because the Paschal mystery, the Risen Christ, lies at the center of the Coun
of Youth.

— From now on, weekends of preparation will bring together regularly
Taizé young people called to make a new kind of visit : they will go by tw
into the Christian communities and parishes of different countries, not
talk about the Council of Youth, but to search together with these communitie
in the course of days of sharing, the meaning of the Easter mystery : Who
Christ, He who lives, who is risen ? What sources of love and life can we dra
upon to become women and men of communion ? A whole exchange of lette
is going on with parishes and communities who are asking for such visit

— In the wake of the Council of Youth celebrations which took place la
year in South and North America, a number of meetings in different countri
of French- and English-speaking Africa are currently being prepare
For later still, preparations are going ahead for meetings in several Asi
countries. Future *"Letters from Taizé"* will contain more news about th

— The last of the North American celebrations occured May 30 - June 1
Lachute, Quebec. Most significant was the gesture of sharing between Fren
and English-speaking people. The celebration had been prepared throu
a number of regional meetings in Quebec and Ontario as well as in oth
provinces of Canada. There was a very diverse mix of nationalities, backgroun
and aspirations. Most of the participants came from Canada, but the US
Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa were also represented. The them
of the prayer progressed from human suffering to *"solidarity in hope"* a
the *"festival of a people on the move"*. Sunday a large number of the loc
residents were present, for the Mass at which the bishop of the dioce
presided. Issue 10 of COMMUNION will have more to say on this celebrati

— Issues 8, 9 and 10 of COMMUNION form a whole, with the over-all ti
PLACES OF HOPE, places already alive with the first signs of a springtime
the Church. Number 8 describes the life of Santa Cecilia, a poor district
Guadalajara (Mexico). Number 9, just published, is devoted to Temple Chur
a tiny Christian congregation in a black low-income section of Philadelp
(USA).

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